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How a Bill Becomes a Law

As a local board of health member it will be important for you to understand how a bill becomes a law, and how rules in Iowa Administrative Code are adopted. A brief explanation of each is provided below.

The Code of Iowa is the Law of the State of Iowa. The Code of Iowa is created and adopted through the legislative process by legislators introducing a bill during the legislative session. Once a bill is introduced, it must go through a series of events before becoming law. The following is a brief overview of how a bill becomes a law.

- 1. A legislator decides to sponsor a bill. Ideas can come from many sources.
- 2. The legislator requests the idea to be drafted into a bill by the Legislative Services Agency.
- 3. The bill draft is then sent to the Senate or House where it is assigned a number and then sent to the President (Senate) or the Speaker (House).
- The President (Senate) or the Speaker (House) assigns the bill to the standing committee within the chamber. The standing committee assigns the bill to a subcommittee. The subcommittee studies the bill and reports findings back to the standing committee.
- 5. The standing committee may report the bill to their respective chamber with recommendations of the standing committee. The standing committee may also send the bill to the chamber without recommendation. The standing committee also has the option to take no action on the bill.
- 6. Once the bill comes out of committee, it is placed on the Calendar, a listing of all bills eligible for debate. At this time legislators may file amendments to the bill.
- 7. The bill, and any amendments filed, is debated by the full chamber. Amendments must be approved by a simple majority of those members
- 8. A constitutional majority must vote "yes" in order for the bill to proceed to the next chamber.
- 9. The bill goes through the same process in the second chamber. If the bill passes the second chamber without amendment, it is sent to the Governor. If the second chamber amends the bill, it must be sent back to the chamber or origin for approval of those amendments. If the chamber cannot come to an agreement on the version of the bill, a conference committee is appointed.
- 10. After the bill passes both chambers in identical form, it is sent to the Governor. The Governor may sign the bill, veto the bill, or take no action on the bill.
- 11. The bill becomes law upon the Governor's signature or after three days during the session if the Governor takes no action. Bills received by the

Governor during the last three days of the session have to be signed or vetoed within 30 days.

A more comprehensive description of how a bill becomes a law can be found at http://www.legis.iowa.gov/Resources/legisProcess.aspx.

Iowa Administrative Code – How rules are adopted

The Iowa Administrative Code is the rules for each of the agencies within state government. In order for an agency to adopt a rule, authority must be given to the agency through an act or law of the legislative body. The following is a brief overview of the steps an agency must take in adopting, amending, or repealing any rule.

- 1. The agency must give notice of its intended action by submitting copies of the notice for publication in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin, which shall be published at least thirty-five days in advance of the action.
- 2. The agency shall allow twenty-five days for submission of comments in writing regarding the notice. Additionally, a public hearing is held to allow for oral presentation regarding the notice.
- 3. In some instances an agency can file for emergency adoption when public participation would be unnecessary, impracticable, or contrary to public interest. In this case, the public comment period outlined in number 2 above is inapplicable.
- 4. Upon completion of the public hearing, the action is then presented to the Administrative Rules Review Committee.
- 5. Upon adoption of the rule, the agency then files the rule in the Office of Administrative Rules Coordinator. Thirty-five days after this date is typically when the rule becomes effective.

A more comprehensive description of how a bill becomes a law can be found in Iowa Code Chapter 17A – Iowa Administrative Procedure Act.